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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Monday, October 29, 1934.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "Hallowe'en Ideas." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, USDA.

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Hallowe'en is the bargain day among our holidays because it offers so much fun for so little money. This is the night of the year when tradition calls for good, old-fashioned, home-made merriment and good, old-fashioned menus, for old clothes to masquerade in, for old games, and old stories told around the fire. And this is the yearly occasion when our own harvest fields and orchards contribute both the decorations and many of the dishes.

The historians say that way back in the days before Christianity, Hallowe'en was a pagan harvest festival. The frightened folk of those days who believed that evil spirits got abroad once a year kept great fires burning all night to scare away these evil things that might do harm to their crops.

Well, we still carry on this early tradition about Hallowe'en. The colors we use in our menus and decorations are shades of bright orange and yellow and black or brown -- the color of firelight, the black night in the background as well as of the golden harvest in the fields. Around the fire in the evening the traditional refreshments are cider or hot spiced grape juice, and doughnuts, nuts to crack, corn to pop, apples to bob for and catch on a string. Some hearty souls even like pumpkin pie and cheese around the fire. Cake to suit the occasion may be old-fashioned gingerbread or devil's food or spicy applesauce cake. Or you may prefer dark molasses cookies cut in funny shapes to please the youngsters. Candy and confections? Well, taffy apples on a stick are one happy choice. So are popcorn balls made with molasses candy or honey, and the bright colored fall confections like candied pumpkin or carrot chips.

But suppose, now, that you have some friends coming in to Hallowe'en dinner. Suppose you want to feed them a simple and inexpensive meal, but one that suits the occasion. Well, here's a menu that's planned for just such a situation. Start the meal with bowls of yellow corn soup with fluffy white popcorn on top -- the popcorn will take the place of crackers or croutons. For the main course, serve pork chops and gravy, glazed sweetpotatoes; brown bread; jellied carrot-and-cabbage salad. For dessert, how about spiced apricots and raisin cookies and coffee or hot cider?

If Hallowe'en just happens to be a mild evening, you might start with a fruit appetizer served in an apple or orange cup. And if you want to be a little fancy, cut a Jack o'Lantern face in the side of your apple or orange cup.



Any cider dish will fit into a Hallowe'en menu. If you have a good supply of sweet cider this fall, you might add a few tablespoons to the fruit-cup mixture. Or you might serve a cider sauce with baked ham or roast pork. Cider jelly makes an attractive salad or dessert. And hot spiced cider is delicious either to drink or poured over baked apples.

So much for food. Now about decorations. Last year I went to a very clever Hallowe'en party where most of the decorations were fall vegetables. The centerpiece at the table, for example, was a basket of beautiful bright vegetables -- tomatoes, green peppers, squashes, cauliflower, cabbage, celery, I can't remember them all. But the center of attention was a vegetable man, about three feet high, who stood directly in front of the doorway, as if to welcome incoming guests. He was made from about eight different vegetables all put together with sharp pointed sticks so that he looked very much like a jointed doll. Two crisp green cabbage heads formed his body. Stout yellow carrots made his jointed legs, and feet. His arms were stalks of celery with the leaves left on to look like fringes falling to cover his hands. A smooth round white turnip made his head, and a bunch of curly endive his fluffy shock of hair. His neck was a slice of turnip.

As for his features, well, if I remember correctly, he had cranberry eyes, a sliced red-pepper nose and corn kernel teeth all put in place with pins or tooth picks. Down the front of his cabbage body he had green brussels-sprouts buttons. And he had a sash of leek leaves tied around between the two cabbages to complete his gallant figure.

Well, it really looks as if I should have time to give you the recipe for apple-sauce cake that several people have been asking for lately. You get out your pencil and I'll list the ingredients. By the way, though this recipe calls for ten ingredients, it's simple to make and inexpensive, a very nice fall and winter cake if you don't want to use it for Hallowe'en.

1/2 cup of fat,  
1 cup of sugar,  
1 cup of unsweetened thick smooth applesauce,  
1 teaspoon of soda,  
1 cup of chopped raisins,  
2-1/2 cups of sifted flour,  
1/2 teaspoon of cloves,  
1/2 teaspoon of cinnamon,  
1/4 teaspoon of nutmeg, and  
1/2 teaspoon of salt.

Once more. (REPEAT)

First, cream the fat and sugar together. Then add the apple sauce. Mix the raisins with one-half cup of flour. Sift the rest with the spices, soda, and salt. Add the dry ingredients to the liquid mixture. Beat well. Pour into a greased pan, and bake in a very moderate oven (300 to 325 degrees F.). The baking will take about an hour.

